

# Happy & Healthy Kids

As you know, taking care of an infant can be a lot of work. Many times your needs take a back seat to your baby's needs. The good news is: Your baby may be sleeping for longer periods through the night and feeding times may stretch to every 4 hours. He also may be settling into a daily routine for napping, feeding, and bathing. You will soon find your baby cooing and smiling. Read this issue of *Happy & Healthy Kids* to learn ways to make months 2 to 4 fun.

## How Your Baby Is Changing

So much happens during these early months! Noticing what your baby can do, and sharing in her excitement, is one of the most important things you can do for her right now.

### By the second month, your baby may:

- Spend longer periods awake during the day.
- Begin to explore her hands and feet.
- Be interested in different sights and sounds around her.
- Gain better control of her head and neck and begin to hold her head and chest up when placed on her tummy.
- Roll over and begin to wiggle—so, she needs to be watched constantly!
- Begin to reach and grab things, and may put her fingers in her mouth.

### And the best yet . . .

By two months, the “social smile” appears—when you smile at your baby, she smiles back! By 3 to 4 months, she begins to laugh and make noises. You may even find that crying time is less.

## Hey mom and dad—look what I can do!

### Have you noticed lately that your baby is:

- Following you with her eyes when you move around the room.
- Getting excited when she sees people and things she knows.
- Holding onto things you give her for a little while or grabbing for toys with both hands.
- Letting you know she needs something by crying.
- Staying awake as much as 10 hours a day and sleeping for a stretch of 8 hours a night. Be patient moms and dads—your baby may still be waking up during the night some of the time!



## Talking time:

### Your baby may be:

Cooing or saying sounds like “ooh,” “ah,” and “ee.” Try saying the words back to baby and watch for a big smile. “He may be talking to you” by cooing, gurgling, and squealing when you talk to him.

## Here are some hints from other new parents that work to help babies learn.

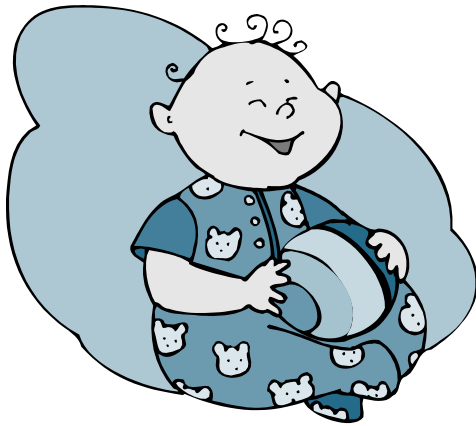
“I talk to my baby in simple sentences about what I’m doing. Sometimes I even sing to him.”

“I noticed my son likes to look at different things around the room. So we put him in his infant seat and change his position often.”

“My husband Josh and I take our twins for a walk each evening. This allows the twins to get out of the house. And Josh and I get some time to talk too!”

“We put a mirror in the hallway and were surprised that our son Clay laughs every time he sees himself.”

“My little Carrie doesn’t like to be left alone in a room. I put her in her infant carrier so she is able to see me. That calms her down.”



“It surprised my wife and I that our son coos and says ‘ooh’ and ‘ah’ when we rub soft fabrics on his skin. The kid loves anything made of soft fleece!”

“My daughter seems to need more time to get used to new things than my niece who is the same age. So, I introduce her to new people, foods, things, and situations very slowly. It works!”

Children can be very different from each other. Some kids may be early talkers. Others may be early walkers. Notice your child’s growth in each area, and encourage each new ability.

## Help! My baby doesn’t like to cuddle!

**Q:** My baby is not a cuddler. In fact he doesn’t like to be rocked or cuddled. Is this usual or something I should be concerned about?

**A:** Most of us think that all babies love to be held, rocked, and cuddled, but some don’t. If your baby is a non-cuddler, it doesn’t mean that he doesn’t like you, or that you’re a bad parent. Some very active babies don’t like to slow down long enough to cuddle.



**Try this:** Watch your baby closely to learn what he likes. Is there a time of day, maybe first thing in the morning, or at bedtime, when he’s slowed down and more ready to be held?

Some babies may be extra-sensitive to the world around them. Bright lights, loud noises, sudden changes, even holding can be too much. These babies are often very jumpy. Try turning down the radio or TV, put a dimmer switch on the nursery light, and handle him gently and carefully.

Show love to your noncuddler in other ways. Smile and make eye contact when you talk to him. Sing to him. And remember, even noncuddly babies want and need to be held sometimes.



## One mom's story about controlling anger

**Geri, age 25, shares her story with *Happy & Healthy Kids***

"My husband is a trucker and on the road a lot, so I'm alone with my baby much of the time. While I would never hit my baby Anna, I'm embarrassed to say that

I used to get so frustrated I found myself yelling at her. My folks yelled a lot when I was growing up and I knew how bad it made me feel. I didn't want the same for my little girl. After all—she is just a little baby and no one deserves to be afraid of her parents. And I know first hand, words do hurt."

"So, I talked to my minister about how to control my anger. She has 3 kids of her own and she gave me great advice. She asked me who was supportive around me and I said that I really liked and trusted my neighbor. Now, when I am feeling upset, I ask my neighbor to take Anna for an hour or two so I can have a break. Next, she suggested I join a group of first-time moms that meets at the library every 3 weeks. I found I really needed and enjoyed the support of my new friends. Finally, my minister said to get Anna on a schedule."

"At first I had no clue why that would work. But it did. After 3 weeks on a regular eating, bathing, and sleeping schedule, Anna cried less. With my baby in a regular bedtime routine I found I could get stuff done around the house and get a little break to watch a show on TV. I found myself less angry—more able to meet my baby's needs."

"I quickly came to see that tiny babies don't do things on purpose to annoy you, even if it sometimes seems like it. Your little baby can't help crying, messing her diapers, or waking up at night when you want to sleep. Sure, every parent gets upset and frustrated sometimes. If you feel out of control, get help. I did, and now I can honestly say I enjoy being with my baby. She is a beautiful child and I am glad we have her."

— Geri

### Geri brings up good points:

- Uncontrolled anger can result in real harm to babies.
- Words spoken loudly or harshly, even if they don't know exactly what the words mean, scare and upset even young babies.
- When you yell or hit, your baby may cry more and be harder to console—making your job harder.

***Never hit—young babies are easily hurt and can be seriously injured. And never shake a baby. Shaking can cause permanent brain damage, blindness, or even death.***

## Teaching your baby trust

The most important thing you can teach her now is to trust you. How does trust develop? By meeting her needs quickly, she learns that you are there when she needs you. By establishing regular routines for feeding, naps, playtime, baths and bedtime, she learns the world is predictable, and that makes her feel safe.

Learning she can count on you, and feeling that her world is safe is the beginning of her developing trust in you. By developing this trust babies feel secure. Babies who feel secure are better able to learn, are more likely to try to please their caregiver, and are more likely to develop self-discipline. All of this makes for an easier time for you!

## Miss Nancy speaks out about stress and postpartum depression

Hello new moms—this month's column is for you. Having a young baby is both joyful and stressful—that's normal! It's easy to deal with the joyful moments, but not so easy when things get hard. Let your family know when you need help, and how they can help. You don't have to do it all yourself. Try to get rest, some exercise every day, and eat healthy, regular meals. When you can —sleep, read, or do “nothing.” You will be able to take care of your baby better when you are refreshed.

### When is it more than stress?

Sometimes you may feel you can't cope. Ask yourself these questions. Are you:

Finding that your energy level is low?  
Feeling very irritable? Getting easily upset or crying often? Sleeping or eating too much or too little? Having trouble concentrating or unable to get certain thoughts off your mind? Finding that

you rarely or never enjoy your baby? Unable to do the things you must do for the baby and yourself? Feeling worthless, guilty, or hopeless?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you may have postpartum depression. Postpartum depression is common after giving birth, yet it should not be ignored.

Depression can make it hard for you to care for your baby, and left untreated, depression can last many months. Mothers with severe depression may have thoughts of harming themselves or their infant.

## Nancy Knows



Don't keep this to yourself, hoping it will go away. It is important to get help. There are many good, effective treatments. Call your doctor or your baby's doctor today. There is hope. There is help.

*All for now!!*

— Nancy Taylor

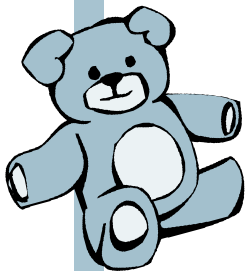
## Happy & Healthy Kids

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# Happy & Healthy Kids








## Your Special Relationship With Your Baby



**Y**ou can help your baby feel good about herself, about you, and about people in general. Your baby's sense of security and confidence will help her deal with the problems of living we all are faced with. Even though your baby is still a young infant, she needs to have your support and caring.

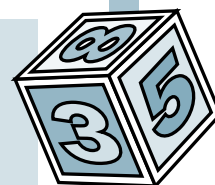


### Here are things that will help your child throughout the years:

-  1 Be consistent and reliable in attending to your baby's needs. This helps her learn to trust.
-  2 Respond to his cries and fears quickly and sensitively. This helps him learn he can count on you.
-  3 Protect your baby from harmful people, places, and situations. This keeps him safe.
-  4 Show your baby love and affection to help make her feel good about herself.
-  5 Understand your baby's negative feelings. This helps her learn how to deal with problems.
-  6 Support your baby as he tries new things. This helps him work to achieve.
-  7 Teach your baby to take turns with you when talking and playing. This helps him learn to share.

*Respect your baby's needs. This helps her feel valued as a unique person.*

**Tip of the month:** Show your baby you care! Even though your baby is young, he needs your praise and approval. The more you respond to your baby when he smiles, laughs, and begins to "talk," the more he'll answer back and smile at you. This is good practice for real talking later. When you get excited about his accomplishments, he will, too. This keeps him working hard to learn even more.



**2 to 4 months #3**

**Place This on Your Refrigerator**